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(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: REYNERS, Joannes [BE/BE];
Grotlaan 33 A, B-3680 Maaseik (BE).

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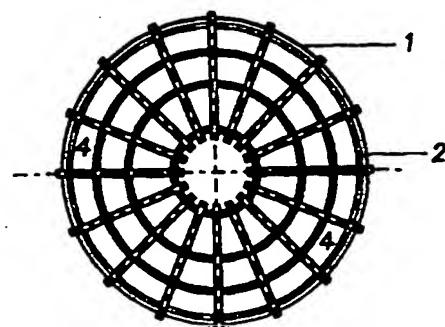
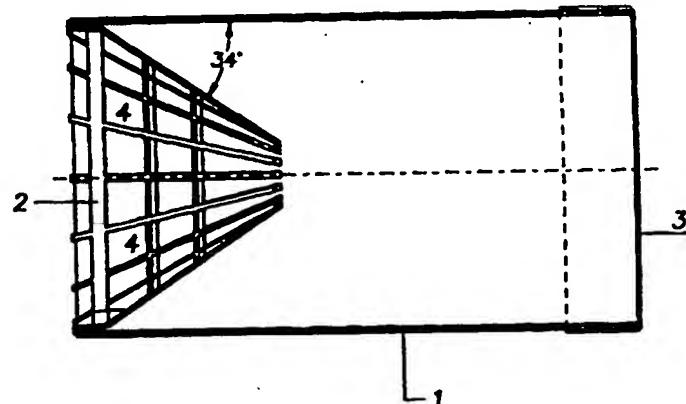
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(54) Title: EFFECTIVE, ECONOMICAL, SELECTIVE, SAFER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY METHOD OF CATCHING
MUSKRATS USING PLASTIC TUBE NETS

(57) Abstract

Using tube nets placed in large numbers. The ideal size is 50 cm long and 25 to 30 cm diameter, manufactured from plastic ((1) figure 1). Sealed at the bottom ((3) figure 1) and provided at the top with one or more flaps ((6) figure 2) or throats (funnels) ((2) figure 1). Fitted with escape openings for small animals ((4) figures 1 and 2). The core of the problem is that there is currently no structural and preventive approach, and many unwanted creatures are trapped. Using tube nets placed permanently in large numbers of locations, the muskrats will be trapped while on the move, before they have chance to breed, quickly reducing the population.



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EFFECTIVE, ECONOMICAL, SELECTIVE, SAFER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY METHOD OF CATCHING MUSKRATS USING PLASTIC TUBE NETS

For 40 years the muskrat has been fought using traps,
poison and all manner of nets. With the result that there
are now more muskrats than ever in Europe - 400,000 per
year in the Netherlands alone, for example. That figure
5 could be reduced to 100,000 a year or less if the mesh of
the net were made smaller.

The disadvantages of trapping, netting and poisoning are:

- 1) 15% of the animals trapped are not muskrats (mostly waterfowl); the figure for poisoning is unknown.
- 10 2) It is necessary to search out the rats and destroy them time and again.
- 3) It is extremely labour-intensive due to the constant need to place and clear material.
- 4) A lot of material is stolen and/or destroyed.
- 15 5) It is expensive and has a limited life due to extensive losses and rusting.
- 6) A new trapper needs two years to master the skills fully.
- 7) Nets often hinder the water flow and quickly become clogged by sand and floating debris.
- 20 8) Poisons continually enter the environment and are consumed by other animals.
- 9) Great damage is caused to agriculture and dikes.
- 10) Environmental and nature organisations are totally opposed to these methods.
- 25 11) These methods are not preventive: it is a case of constantly trying to keep down the rat population after they have bred.
- 12) Tonnes of heavy metals are released into the atmosphere (zinc from the nets due to rusting).
- 30 13) The results show that these methods are not effective

In the course of three years I have developed a system for reducing and maintaining the muskrat population at a very low level. This is achieved by placing tube nets in large numbers, for example 4.000 in the Belgian province of Limburg (covering 1/9 of Belgium).

In my area, which covers 1/4 of Limburg, I have cut the number of catches in the course of three years from around 6.000 to 1.000 per year. I currently have 900 nets out in my area; this needs to be increased to 1.000 and the problem will be solved.

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- These nets are placed everywhere and stay in position for ever, wherever muskrats are or have been present, includ-
ing at strategic locations which the rats pass in large
numbers during the spring and autumn migrations. This has
5 a preventive effect since the rats are caught before they
have a chance to breed, thus leading to a rapid reduction
in the rat population. The nets are made from new or re-
cycled plastic.
- There are various types, the two most common being:
- 10 1) a throated net (fig.1)
2) a net with flap (fig.2)
- The throated net is the most common, being used in deep
water. The nets can be used in a variety of shapes, such
as square, oval, hexagonal, etc., though round is the
15 most obvious. Several colours are also available.
- 15 The net with a flap is designed for use in shallow water.
The throated net is able to expand (the throat (2) fig.1
widens), enabling the rat to enter easily but preventing
escape or habituation; thereafter the rats drown.
- 20 The throat and flap contain escape holes ((4) fig.1+2)
for small fry such as crabs, frogs, fish, voles, etc., so
that the nets work very selectively. the ends of the nets
are sealed by welding or with a cover (fig. 1+2, (3)).
- 25 The flap (fig. 2, (6)) in the flapped nets is hinged (5)
this hinge is attached to the net itself or is fixed in
some other way. The flap and throat can be made from PVC
thread or other material.
- 30 Alternatively, both systems can be made up as a complete
net and pushed into the tube. However, the cheapest, most
effective and longest lasting method is to make only the
throat and the flap from plastic.
- 35 The tubes, which are dug transversely into the dike, can
be of various shapes and sizes, from 20 cm. to 150 cm.
long and from 6 to 70cm in diameter. The ideal size is
50 cm. long and 25 to 30 cm. in diameter. There are vari-
ous reasons for this: cheap, quick to position, no deep
water needed, highly effective, etc.
- 40 Using this system it would even be possible to eradicate
the muskrat altogether.
- 40 These throats and flaps can also be used to make normal
nets, i.e. without tubes, either wholly or partly from
plastic and thread.

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The advantages of these tube nets are:

- 1) No other animals are trapped by mistake.
- 2) They work all year round.
- 3) They are not stolen or destroyed (they are underwater and underground and thus invisible).
- 5 4) Once in position, little work is required.
- 5) Cheap due to long life.
- 6) No bait or other material is needed.
- 7) A new trapper can be trained in a week.
- 10 8) If there are no muskrats we can concentrate on clearing water and coypu in an environmentally friendly way.
- 9) The tubes do not obstruct the water flow and do not get dirty or become clogged.
- 10) No poison or traps needed: more environmentally friendly and safer.
- 15 11) This system will enable the muskrat population to be reduced to and maintained at an acceptable level within a few years.
- 12) No more damage to farm crops and dikes.
- 20 13) Environmental and nature organisations are very happy with this system (Nature Help Centre, Opglabbeek, Limburg, Belgium).
- 14) Less danger from the disease (leptospirosis) spread by rats.
- 25 15) No-one will lose their jobs because of the new system, because the system must be maintained.
- 16) It is no longer necessary to look for the rats: they enter the nets automatically while on the move.
- 17) The system continues working during staff illness or
- 30 18) The results show what the system is highly effective.

The muskrat population can be reduced to and maintained at an acceptable level within three years. The system is a new application and working method using new and familiar resources. It is effective, economical, environmentally friendly and selective.

I request protection to:

- 1) catch muskrats using tube nets in any form whatsoever, with one or more flaps and/or throats (funnels with or without flap), used en masse, and all derivatives hereof
- 40 2) produce or have produced all necessary materials: tubes, covers, throats, flaps, etc.

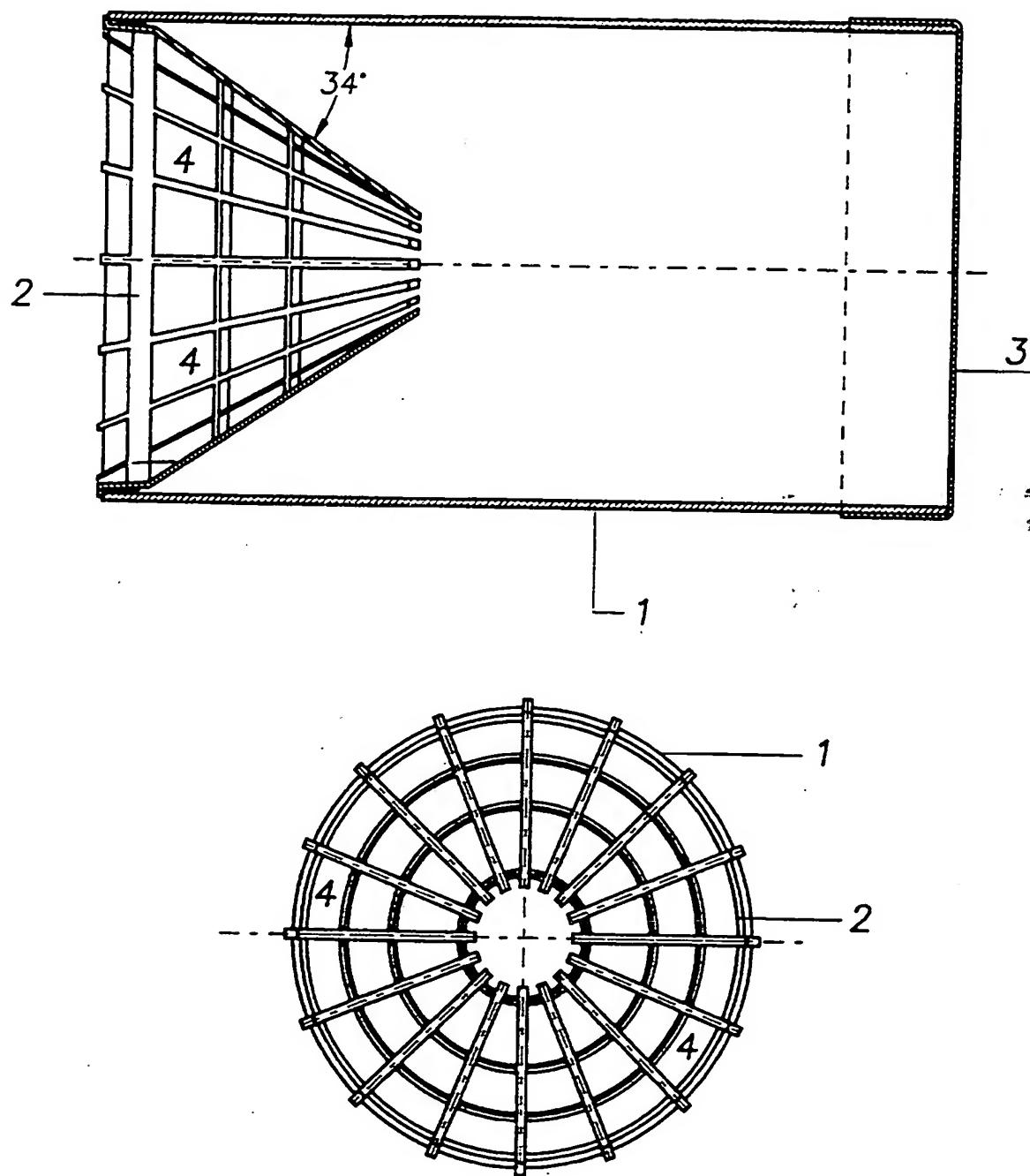
-4-

**Effective, economical, selective, safer and environmentally
method of catching muskrats using plastic tube nets**

Using tube nets placed in large numbers. The ideal size
is 50 cm long and 25 to 30 cm diameter, manufactured
from plastic ((1) fig. 1).
Sealed at the bottom ((3) fig. 1) and provided at the
5 top with one or more flaps ((6) fig.2) or throats
(funnels) ((2) fig.1).
Fitted with escape openings for small animals ((4) fig.
1+2)

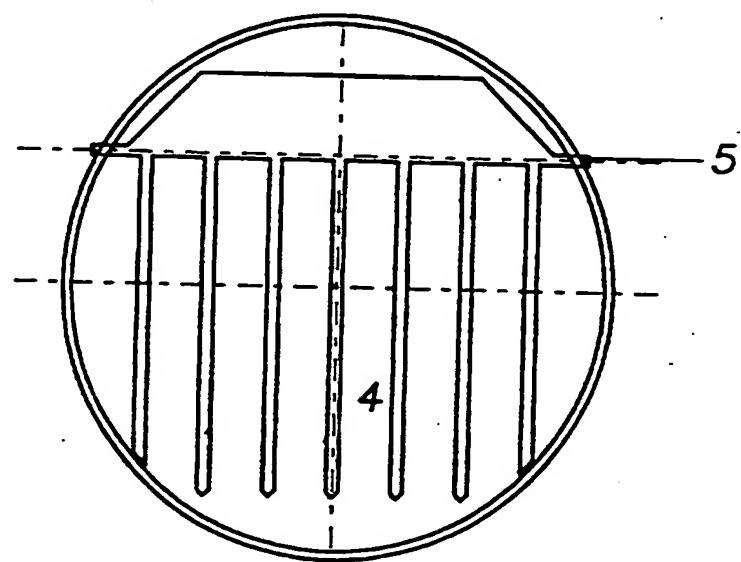
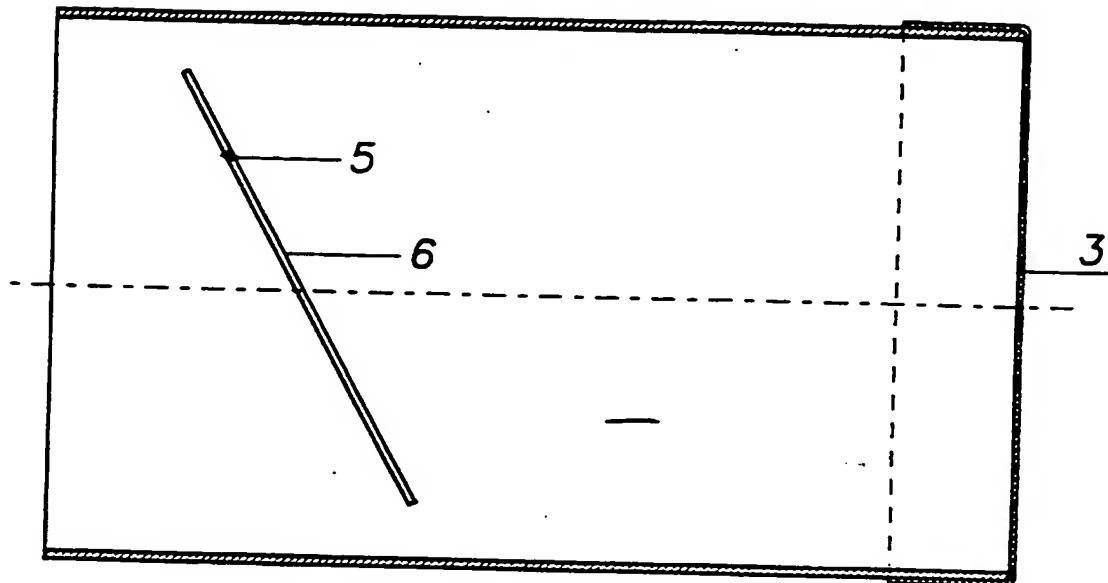
The core of the problem is that there is currently no
10 structural and preventive approach, and many unwanted
creatures are trapped.
Using tube nets placed permanently in large numbers of
locations, the muskrats will be trapped while on the
move, before they have chance to breed, quickly reducing
15 the population.

Fig.1



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Fig.2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int'l Application No
PCT/BE 95/00079

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A01M23/08 A01M23/18

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 A01M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	NL,A,7 607 747 (SCHOLTZEL) 25 January 1977 see the whole document ---	1
A	NL,A,8 902 266 (LOONSTRA) 2 April 1991 see the whole document ---	1
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Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+ 31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax. (+ 31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Piriou, J-C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
NL-A-7607747	25-01-77	DE-A-	2532523	10-02-77
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AU-B-568974	14-01-88	AU-B-	5609486	05-03-87
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